

AMES SERIES OF
STANDARD AND MINOR DRAMA.
NO. 151.

**AFTER TEN YEARS;
OR,
The Maniac Wife.**

THE FIRST OF "HARDY" REYNOLDS, A. D. 1878, SECRETARY OF THE
OF THE DEPARTMENT OF THE STATE, AND MEMBER OF THE
U. S. COMMISSIONER OF THE GENERAL LAND OFFICE.

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AFTER TEN YEARS,

— OR —

THE MANIAC WIFE,

An Original Romantic Drama,

IN THREE ACTS,

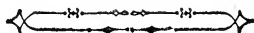
BY

B. W. HOLLENBECK, M. D.

With the exits and entrances, positions of the performers on the stage, and the whole of the stage business carefully marked, from the author's original manuscript.



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AFTER TEN YEARS; OR, THE MANIAC WIFE.

CHARACTERS.

Job Brandon,.....*A man of the world.*
 Randolph Archer,.....*A Recluse.*
 Frank Wallace,.....*A young lawyer.*
 Hezekiah Slick,.....*A Yankee peddler.*
 Jonathan Dobbs,.....*A back-woodsman.*
 Patrick Rooney,*Slick's companion.*
 John Perkins,.....*The Landlord.*

Mrs. Brandon,.....*Insane wife of Brandon,*
 Mrs. Archer,.....*Wife of Archer.*
 Rodna Archer,.....*Daughter of Archer.*
 Emily Joyce,.....*Companion of Mrs. Archer.*
 Mrs. Perkins,.....*The Landlady.*



COSTUMES.

BRANDON.—Fifty years old. Fashionable light colored suit; trashy watch seal; may wear short burnsides and mustache.

ARCHER.—Forty-five years old. Act First.—Long gray hair and beard; thread-bare coat and waist-coat, slippers. Act Second—Coat exchanged for dressing gown. Act Third—Hair and beard trimmed. Plain black suit.

WALLACE.—Fashionably cut light pants, coat, and waistcoat.

SLICK.—Large checked pants, long blue coat, brass buttons; blue waistcoat; high white hat; large red handkerchief around neck; long straight hair, and thin straggling beard light or sandy.

DOBBS.—Blue woolen shirt, wide collar, large black neck-tie, wide straw hat, heavy boots with long tops; may wear a mustache.

ROONEY.—Dark coarse pants; figured cotton shirt; gaudy handkerchief around neck; old coarse shoes; old narrow brimmed soft black hat; red hair; may wear a mustache.

PERKINS.—Sixty years old, rather portly; bald head, red face; linen pants and vest; thin black coat; substantial slippers.

MRS. BRANDON.—Straight full skirt, plain waist, black; black hair long and straight hanging loose about her head and shoulders.

MRS. ARCHER.—Forty years old, plain black suit; gray hair.

RODNA ARCHER.—Eighteen years old, light hair. Act First—Neat figured muslin dress; plain wide brimmed hat, trimmed with blue. Act Second—Plain white muslin dress. Act Third—Traveling dress and hat.

MRS. PERKINS.—Fifty years old, rather stout; gray hair; plain dress, plain cuffs and collar; large white apron.

EMILY JOYCE.—Act First—Traveling dress. Act Second and Third—Plain home dress. Twenty years old.

Costumes may be modern, or about 1800.

PROPERTIES.

ACT FIRST.—Pistol for Archer, two pistols for Brandon, money for Wallace and Brandon, pocket-book for Archer.

ACT SECOND.—Pistol for Mrs. Archer.

ACT THIRD.—Club for Rooney, pistol for Brandon, and dagger for Mrs. Brandon.

After Ten Years; or, The Maniac Wife.

ACT I.

SCENE FIRST.—*A wood.*

Enter from L., Jonathan Dobbs and Frank Wallace.

Dobbs. Wa'al, I've done as I agreed—yonder is Lone Cliff, and all you've got to do is to follow your nose, and you'll soon be there.

Wallace. Well my good fellow, I'm sorry to lose your companionship; so suppose you accompany me to the home of this mountain recluse.

Dobbs. No, thank ye; Jonathan Dobbs ain't quite as big a fool as he looks. I went thar onct stranger, and I allow I'll not go again. No, "not if the court knows herself, and I think she do."

Wallace. Did you see a ghost, or did the old man set the dog on you?

Dobbs. Wa'al—no, I didn't exactly see a ghost, but I did see the queerest old chap I ever sot eyes on, and as crazy as a March hare.

Wallace. H'm—this is indeed interesting. And does this old man live alone, so far from human companionship?

Dobbs. No—I don't think he does—when I was thar, I didn't 'zactly see any one else, but I heerd some one else.

Wallace. Heard some one else?

Dobbs. Yes, and unless I made an all-fired mistake, it was a female woman's voice I heard too.

Wallace. A woman's voice?

Dobbs. Yes, and it sounded as sweet and purty as a black-bird's in the spring.

Wallace. What did she say?

Dobbs. Ye see, the old man was a given it to me hot and heavy, fer trespassin' as he called it, an a gitten' hisself worked up into a towerin' rage, when that thur voice said—kinder coxin' and sweet—"Now father don't get angry, I don't believe the man means any harm," and the old chap cooled right down an' went into the house, meek as a kitten.

Wallace. And you did not see the owner of the voice?

Dobbs. Not even her shadder. I didn't care to ask any questions; fur I was mighty glad to git out o' that with a hull skin.

Wallace. How long have these queer people lived here?

Dobbs. Let me see—nigh about ten years—as nigh as I kin recollect.

Wallace. And has no one but yourself seen any of them?

Dobbs. Not as I has ever heard on. And I ain't in any hurry to git better acquainted, you kin jest bet.

Wallace. Strange, strange, these must be the people I have sought for so long and faithfully; I have followed my instructions to the letter, and cannot have made a mistake. I had not expected to find a churlish half-crazed hermit, but one of nature's noblemen to whom the world had been unjust, and who had buried himself in this primeval wilderness to commune with nature undisturbed, far from the haunts of vice and crime. (*to Dobbs who is going*) Stay a moment, I must see this strange recluse. Can you suggest any plan by which we can overcome his prejudice and gain an audience with him?

Dobbs. Wa'al—no—I can't say as I kin. The only way I know is to go down there and storm the castle.

Wallace. See here Dobbs, if you will assist me in this matter, I will pay you liberally.

Dobbs. That's all right—but before I make any bargain with you, I want to know what sort o' a scrape you're a goin' to git me into.

Wallace. I am seeking a man who has been terribly wronged; robbed of a fortune by a designing villian. The person I seek has buried himself from sight so effectually, that all trace of him has been lost for years, until some months ago a partial clue was obtained. This clue I have carefully followed, and it has led me here; now if this hermit proves to be the man for whom I am looking, I can restore to him position and fortune. There read this document, it will prove the truth of my assertions. (*gives paper.*)

Dobbs. (*turning paper over*) I'll take ye'n word stranger. But what is ye'r name? ye hain't told me that yet.

Wallace. My name is Frank Wallace—I am partner in the firm of Maynard & Wallace, attorneys at law, Philadelphia. Now my man, are you satisfied?

Dobbs. It's all right Mr. Wallace, I'm your man, what am I to do?

Wallace. Go back to the village and wait until I come. I will go down to this mysterious abode and reconnoiter, and when I return we will decide on some plan of action. Meantime be sure and keep this to yourself. Here take this as a retainer. (*gives money*) I will be off. (*exit R.*)

Dobbs. Wa'al now this is what I call a mighty queer piece of business. Here is a spruce looking feller skipping around all over the country a huntin' up a crazy old coot, who hain't got manners enough to treat a chap decent when he happens to see him—at least that's the way I found it. Mebbe though if a feller should bring him a fortin', he'd polish up his manners some. The young coon seems to have lots o' chink—let's see how much he planked down for a retainer, as he called it. (*takes money out and looks at it and whistles*) Twenty dollars! Jonathan you're in luck. If this is a retainer, what will the whole fee be. (*looks L.*) Why, blast my eyes if there ain't a chap a comin' this way as if Old Nick had a hold o' his coat tail! By jimmy he's togged out to beat anything too! Guess I'll interview him as the newspaper chap says.

Enter Job Brandon, L., looking nervously around—sees Dobbs.

Dobbs. How dy'e do?

Brandon. Good-day, sir.

(*bows awkwardly.*)

(*with dignity.*)

Dobbs. It's kinder pleasant to-day, guess we're goin' to have a spell of weather?

Brandon. It will not surprise me in the least, if we do have a "spell of weather." It must be about the season for it in these parts?

Dobbs. Yes, about this time o' year, we ginerally git a spell o' weather. (*to Brandon who is going*) I say stranger, you seem to be in a mighty big hurry; mebber yer arter a hoss thief or somethin'?

Brandon. Perhaps I am, and then again, perhaps I am not. (*aside*) Perhaps I can learn something of this old fellow, that will be of use to me. (*aloud*) My good fellow, is there a place here about, called Witches' Glen?

Dobbs. Perhaps there is, and then agin, perhaps there ain't.

Brandon. I know that somewhere not far from here, is a place called Witches' Glen. And that there is an old stone house in it, said to be haunted—am I not right?

Dobbs. Wa'al, suppose you are right, what does that signify?

Brandon. It may not signify much to you; but that is neither here nor there, I want to find the, "haunted house," in Witches' Glen. Will you direct me the way to it?

Dobbs. (*aside*) There seems to be a mighty sight o' huntin' fer the old house—I'll pump him a little. (*aloud*) Why, yes, I kin direct you the way to the Glen, and the old house, but what in thunder you want to go there fer, I can't make out?

Brandon. Well, which way is it?

Dobbs. See here stranger; you'd better take a fool's advice, and stear clear of that place; you'll not get the warmest kind of a welcome, if you do happen to stumble on to it.

Brandon. I cannot see what difference it will make to you, whether I am received warmly or not—unless you have some interest there.

Dobbs. Me, have an interest there? Not a bit of it, you may be mighty sure.

Brandon. Perhaps you have had a reception there, that did not flatter you greatly? But that makes no difference to me; what I want is to find the place, and I will risk the reception I receive.

Dobbs. All right, go ahead. The old house is straight across the valley, at the foot of that cliff—the tall one in the middle.

Brandon. I see the place. Good day.

(*exit R.*)

Dobbs. I'd kinder like to see that feller face the old man—it's my private opinion he'll git beautifully curried if he gits inside the house, fer the old man is game and no mistake. I wonder whar Mr. Wallace is by this time, I a'most wish I'd a gone with him, he may get into trouble and need some help. But I reckon he can handle the old man, if he gits into a muss—I guess I'll make tracks fer town, if he don't git in all right, I'll come back and look fer him.

(*exit Dobbs L.*)

SCENE SECOND.—Deep wood in second grooves.

Enter Rodna Archer, R.

Rodna. I am surely lost in this forest. I know not which way to turn—what shall I do? What shall I do? And to add to the terrors of my situation, night will soon be upon me. There is no sign of human life visible; and that huge bank of storm clouds, rearing it's ragged edge above the mountain tops, portends a tempest. And

poor father watching and waiting, for me at home! What will become of me? Oh, what will become of me? (*sinks down upon a rock covers face with her hands; sways to and fro; starts up and attempts to go on, but weakness prevents; sways as if about to fall*) I can not go on—my weary limbs refuse there office—I must rest. (*about to sit—starts*) No—no—I must not stop, I must go on. Who knows what danger may lurk in the tangled recesses of this dark forest; how many prowling animals may be around me, only waiting for night to come? Oh, this is terrible, terrible! And see, the sun is sinking behind yonder storm cloud, and the gloom of approaching night, increases the horrors of my situation. Oh, Heaven be merciful! (*sinks on knees in an attitude of prayer, looks off toward L., starts to her feet.*) Some one approaches—I will call for assistance. No, no, I dare not. It may be better to face the dangers of the forest, than meet a stranger here—and yet if assistance does not come, I must perish miserably. (*starts forward and falls fainting c.*)

Enter Wallace, L. I E., hurriedly.

Wallace. I must make haste, or the storm will be upon me before I can reach the village. Ah! this is the place where I parted from my friend Dobbs this morning, I fear he is weary waiting for me long ere this. (*sees Rodna, starts*) Good heavens! what is this, a corpse? (*kneels beside her, taking her hand*) No, it is only a faint. By jove she is beautiful—I wonder if it is only a faint? she shows no sign of life—if she should be dead it would place me in an awkward situation—no she will soon revive, there are signs of returning animation. (*during this, Wallace rubs her hands and raises her head on his knee.*)

Rodna. Where am I, and how came I here?

Wallace. I don't know how you came here, but I found you a few moments ago, lying here in a dead faint.

Rodna. (rising) Ah, I remember! I am lost in the forest—have wandered about since noon, and when I reached this place found myself too exhausted to proceed farther—and overcome with fear, fainted when I saw you approaching.

Wallace. I believe my arrival was rather opportune. But pray tell me where you live, and I will assist you there as speedily as possible. We must soon obtain shelter, for the storm will ere long be upon us.

Rodna. (aside agitated) I cannot, dare not refuse his assistance and protection. But what will father say if he accompanies me home? (*aloud*) I think we had better go to the nearest house for shelter; I do not know in which direction my home lies.

Wallace. The nearest house is at the village, four miles away—except the old stone house in Witches' Glen—do you know aught of that?

Rodna. (aside) The old stone house? what does he know of the old stone house—my home. (*aloud*) How far is this old house from here?

Wallace. Something less than two miles. (*aside*) She must have heard the old house is haunted, else why this agitation?

Rodna. Will you tell me the direction from here?

Wallace. The old house stands at the foot of yonder tall cliff. If you are not afraid of its uncanny reputation, we will endeavor to

reach it before the storm breaks, and demand shelter, which I am sure cannot be refused under the circumstances.

Rodna. You say "demand shelter," would not a request obtain it?

Wallace. No—I do not think anything but a demand, and a pre-emptory one would avail. But do not be frightened, for no one however churlish, could refuse you shelter from the night and storm. So if you feel equal to the task, we will go at once; we have no time to lose.

(shouts heard without.)

Rodna. Hear that shout? some other unfortunate must be lost.

Wallace. If you are not afraid to remain alone a few moments, I will investigate.

Rodna. Oh, go! go at once! I am not afraid—you will soon return?

Wallace. Yes, I will soon return. Do not leave this place until I come.

(exit Wallace, R.)

Rodna. What will be the result of this accidental, and I may say, providential meeting? Here am I, lost in the forest, a night of darkness and storm coming on; when a young man—a stranger, finds me fainting and exhausted—offers me his guidance and protection which I perforce accept. I must permit him to accompany me home; to my home, which has been so jealously guarded from the outside world, for ten long years. Yes, I must brave my father's anger, for without his assistance, I cannot hope to reach my home to-night; I must choose between the perils of the forest, and my father's wrath. Oh, why did this necessity arise? why did I wander so far from home? Circumstances will thus force a part of our well-kept secret from us. I must submit to the inevitable. And this stranger—he is young and handsome, and I am sure well bred; his face and bearing assure me I have nothing to fear from him. *(looks R.)* Ah! he comes, and with a companion—perhaps my estimate of him is wrong, I will soon know.

Enter Wallace and Dobbs, R.

Dobbs. I tell ye, mister, I thought ye wer lost, or had been foully dealt with down in that devilish haunted old house, and so I come out through the woods a hollerin' like all creation to see if I could come acrosst ye any where; and as good luck would have it, I found the trail we tuk this morning, and so struck ye all right.

Wallace. I must thank you again, Dobbs, for the interest and friendship you express; you will lose nothing I assure you, I will pay you liberally. But here is a young lady, whom I found lost and fainting, who needs shelter from the coming storm. Where is the nearest house?

Dobbs. The nearest house is that consarned old rookery in the glen.

Wallace. Well, let us go at once, we are wasting precious time—the storm will soon be upon us.

Rodna. Yes, yes, do not delay longer. *(aside)* Father's anger cannot be as terrible as my present situation.

Dobbs. Come on, then; we'll storm the blamed old castle, if we can't get in without. Come!

Wallace. *(to Rodna)* Allow me to assist you—the way is rough, and we must hasten. *(Rodna takes his offered arm—they exit R.)*

SCENE THIRD.—*The bar-room of a village tavern. John Perkins, the landlord, Pat Rooney and Hezekiah Slick discovered.*

Perkins. I tell you what, it's devilish queer that two fine gentlemen should be looking for the haunted house in Witches' Glen in one day.

Rooney. I'll shwear to that same meself, for it's the queerest business oive sane this many a day, sure.

Perkins. The mystery is, how did they ever find out there is such a place?

Rooney. Shure that's a question oive no manes of answering at all, at all.

Slick. Mebbe if yeou'd ask one o' them chaps yeou'd find out.

Rooney. Divil a bit would I care to be askin' the ould party wid the portly watch seal, for unless Pat Rooney is off his parpendicular entirely ye'd be moighty apt to gita rap along side the gourd, that would remind yez of a Donnybrook fair.

Perkins. And then the young fellow giving Jonathan Dobbs twenty dollars to help him get to the old place, shows pretty clear that there is a bigger mystery about the whole thing than any of us has suspected.

Rooney. That's mighty true for yez, landlord, and it's meself that'll be figgerin' out the mysterious mystery of the whole thing mighty soon, I can tell yez.

Slick. I've hern a mighty sight o' talk about this haunted house in my emigratory perambulations about the country. Old Aunt Dillas who lives up in Mullen Lane, sed as how she didn't believe any one lived thar 'cept ghosts and sich. But I'm darned if I wouldn't like to find out, and I'd like to appoint a committee o' ten to carry on an exhaustin' examination o' the hull concern. What d'ye say, Paddy, will ye make one o' that committee?

Rooney. Arrah, now ye's speekin' right out in meetin', so ye are. Give us yer hand, ye traveler merchant; I'll freeze to yez as close as if the thermomater were a foot below Ceasar. *(they shake hands)*

Perkins. I'd really like to know what started Jonathan out in such a big hurry awhile ago.

Slick. Thar's some more o' this mysterious mystery hangin' around this affair that Paddy and me must elucidate purty considerable. Eh, Paddy?

Rooney. Yes right again, partner; an' it'll be a mighty dark sayeret if we don't git it dead to rights before long. Hold on there, Pat, ef there ain't the ould party wid the portly watch seal a comin' smack into the house.

Enter Job Brandon, R.

Brandon. Landlord, I would like supper immediately.

Perkins. I will attend to it at once. *(exit, L.)*

Rooney. Mister Slick, how did yez find the folks down in Witches' Glen the other day?

Brandon starts, half turns around, quickly recovers his composure, is closely watched by both men.

Slick. Wall, jest so—so middling like. Doin' purty well considerin'.

Rooney. An' when are yez goin' down again?

Slick. In a few days I reckon. Ye see they sorter wanted some merchandise I didn't hev' in stock—stock o' summer goods kinder run down ye know—so when I get my new stock I'm agoin' to meander down that way again an' give 'em a chance to lay in a supply o' fine goods, such as they kin git no where else. Sold only by H. Slick, Esq., proprietor o' the greatest travelin' em-po-ri-um, dry goods, notions, etc.

Rooney. Arrah now, me travelin' dry goods store; when you make yer next thrip to the ould place couldn't yez give me a clarkship? Oi'd like mighty well to make the acquaintance of them interestin' people who live with the ghosts and hobgoblins down forinist the big rock.

Slick. Paddy, did ye ever hear o' peepin' Tom?

Rooney. Papin' Tom? And who the devil is papin' Tom? I never heard o' him.

Slick. Ye see, Paddy, he peeped once too often and lost his eyesight.

Rooney. And by the same token yez think I'd lose me own eyesight by takin' a pape too much? Niver a bit of it, me Soloman friend, I'll be mighty careful of that.

Brandon. (to *Slick*) It seems you know something of the mysterious people who live in Witches' Glen?

Slick. I might know more and I might know less.

Brandon. Well, tell us what you do know about them. Your conversation has interested me greatly. There is, I believe, a vein of superstition in every person's nature, and that I have been endowed with a fair share of it I am willing to admit.

Slick. No sирее, you'll never git Hezekiah Slick to tell tales on his customers.

Rooney. That's right, me travelin' emporium. That kind of sentiment makes the whole world kin. Give me yer hand, I likes to shake with an honest man. If ye wasn't a Yankee oi'd swear ye was an Irishman. (they shake hands)

Brandon. You misunderstand me, I do not wish to pry into family secrets, I only feel curious about these people because I have heard so many queer things about them, and you seem better able to gratify my love of the marvelous than any one I have seen. So I trust you will satisfy my curiosity in some degree.

Slick. I might be able to satisfy your curiosity but I ain't agoin' in that direction.

Rooney. Stick to yer text, me b'y. Yer on the high road to imminence and distinction.

Brandon. (aside) How can I open that fool's mouth?

Enter Perkins, the landlord, L.

Perkins. Your supper is ready. 'This way, sir.

(exit landlord and Brandon, L.)

Slick. That chap wants to find out somethin' mighty bad, and so do we, don't we Paddy?

Rooney. Yer right again', me b'y; an' as sure as Saint Patrick was a gentleman we'll be at the bottom of it before long.

Slick. Yes, Paddy, yer a cute one. The interrogations ye propounded set him agoin' in good shape. He thinks we know a heap about this thing, an' he'll want to find it all out.

Rooney. See here, me jewil, I know yez got a foin eddication, but if ye'd plaze leave out some of them big words an' try to talk the blessed King's English t'would be obligin' me ye'd be.

Slick. All right, Paddy. As near as I can make out ye never had a tarnal sight o' schoolin', an' to oblige ye I'll endeavor to leave out some of the big words. But ye see a man in my line o' business must learn to use mighty takin' language—it's a part o' his stock in trade ye know.

Rooney. Oive no doubt of it at all, at all, for it would be takin' meself a divil of a time to make out the maneing of them.

Slick. I tell ye Paddy, when I get time, I'll give ye a few lessons in the art o' talkin' that'll surprise you.

Rooney. It's surprisin' me ye've been fur a long while wid yer big words an' yer solemn face. Why, me b'y, any man to look at yez would be willin' to swear ye couldn't lie or chate no more thin an out an' out pracher.

Slick. Supposin' we change the subject o' conversation. I reckon we can find suthin' o' more general interest to talk about.

Rooney. Oi'm ever wid yez, as the corn said to the tight boot. Give us a start an' away we go.

Slick. Come on, Paddy, we must be stirin'. Let's take a walk an' be a maturin' some plan o' action. Come on.

(*exit Slick and Rooney, R.*)

Enter Brandon, L.

Brandon. Halloa! the traveling merchant and his would-be-clerk are gone. He evidently knows something about these people in the Glen, and I suppose the only way to open his mouth is to unlock it with a golden key. I'll try its potency when I see him again. I must devise some plan by which to penetrate to the shell of their recluse and get at the kernel of his identity. I am very positive there is no mistake, but I must be doubly certain before I move. The game is a desperate one and requires the utmost caution. I must not alarm him until I am ready to act. I must mature my plans at once. I have never failed in any scheme, I will not fail in this. And she, perdition blast her, has managed to elude the vigilance of her keepers and make her escape. She may cause me trouble at any time. If I can get her in my power again I will end forever the possibility of further trouble from her. She has been a thorn in my flesh for years. She has kept the fires of hell burning in my soul. I loved her once—she scorned me and choose another; since that time I have lived only for revenge. I hate them both. For ten years they have felt the scorching breath of my hatred—they shall feel it still. She has escaped me for a time, but he is in my power. I feel the thrills of my coming triumph—of my revenge. I must be moving; time flies and I am all impatience.

(*exit, R.*)

Enter Mrs. Archer and Emily Joyce, D. C.

Mrs. Archer. At last, dear Emily, we have reached a haven of safety. We can surely conceal ourselves among these mountains so effectually that even Job Brandon's lynx-eyed hate cannot discover us.

Emily. I am confident we shall be perfectly safe here, Mrs. Archer. And you will now have the opportunity of obtaining the rest you so much need.

Mrs. A. Yes, Emily, I feel a buoyancy of freedom which I have not felt before for years. It seems to me that I am now free from the persecutions of that incarnate villain. I feel new hope—new life. I can almost believe my storm-tossed life has at last reached a safe harbor. God grant it may be so.

Emily. Yes, the sky is once more clear, the star of hope is shining brightly upon us. Ah! here comes mine host.

Enter landlord, L.

Perkins. Ahem! In what way can I serve you, ladies?

Emily. We would like a quiet room and supper served in it, please.

Perkins. (bowing) Your supper will be ready in half an hour, and I will see that your room is prepared at once. *(exit, bowing)*

Emily. I believe our lives have fallen in pleasant places. Our host beams with good nature and hospitality, and the house is neat and well appointed.

Mrs. A. Yes, Emily, everything seems as pleasant and quiet here. I feel so secure, so free from apprehension, it seems like a new world. I cannot at once dispel the shadow of my life, and the old horror creeps over me at times. "But hope springs eternal from the human heart," and I live on. Oh, if I could only penetrate the mystery of my loved one's fate.

Emily. There, dear friend, let us think of brighter things. Enjoy your freedom and the beauties around you. Look upon the bright side—all will yet be well. Here comes the landlord, we will try and get some much needed rest.

Enter landlord, R.

Perkins. Ladies, your room is prepared. I will show you the way. *(exit, L., landlord showing them out. Change to*

SCENE FOURTH.—A village street.

Enter, L., Pat Rooney and Slick.

Rooney. Well, me solemn friend, how air ye progressin'?

Slick. See here, partner, I've been talkin' around an' makin' some observations, an' I've made up my mind to go down to the Glen to onct an' look arter the biz at headquarters. That thar chap that wee see at the tavern this afternoon, is a skirmishin' round right lively, an' I've about concluded we'll hev' to hurry if we get ahead o' him.

Rooney. Ah, me jewil, that's the way oi likes to hear yez talk. Ye may count on Pat Rooney every time, an' if we two can't make things as loively as a Donnybrook fair, fer any spalpane who nades his mug frescoed, may Old Nick fly away wid the likes of me.

Slick. Hold on, Paddy, it's a mighty good time to keep yer jaw a little quiet. Here comes our friend of the tavern.

Rooney. Mum is the word.

Enter Brandon, R.

Brandon. Halloo! lads. I have been looking for you.

Rooney. Is it lookin' fer us, ye say? Ye can be lookin' at us now if ye have a mind to, so ye can.

Brandon. See here, I want to talk business with you.

Slick. Fire away.

Brandon. I learned from your conversation to-day that you know something of the people who live in Witches' Glen.

Slick. Wa'al, supposin' I do?

Brandon. Now I want you to tell me all you know about them, and perhaps I'll need your assistance in making some arrests and in various other matters which you will know about in due time. The labor will be light and the pay large. What say you, is it a bargain?

Slick. See here, mister, we'll kind o' take this thing into consideration for a few minutes an' let ye know what we'll do. I suppose we'll find ye here or hereabouts when we git back?

Brandon. Yes, yes, I will be here. Do not remain away long as time is precious. We must be moving. *(Exit Rooney and Slick, L.)*—If those fellows serve me faithfully I am sure to succeed. Ha! there comes two ladies, and I could almost swear I know one of them. No, no, it is impossible; she cannot have found her way to this out of the way place. However, I must be cautious. It may be her, and if it is, the devil has surely conspired to help his own. I will conceal myself and await developments.

(steps around corner, L.)

Enter Mrs. Archer and Emily from R.

Mrs A. This mountain air revives me; I feel new life and vigor, and this glad sense of freedom lightens the dark cloud of sorrow which has so long been about me. Can it be that I have at last escaped my persecutors, at last reached the morning of a happier life? Oh! if I could only realize it, how grateful I should be.

Emily. Dear Mrs. Archer, do not think of the past, bury it forever from your memory. Bury it as deeply as we are buried from the great sinful world without.

Mrs A. Dear Emily, I only wish I could forever banish the recollection of my great wrong. I will strive to do so, but years of persecution has graven it upon my memory too deeply to be easily effaced. Oh, Emily, you can form no just conception of what I have suffered, of my long agony; I have prayed and striven for release, but failure was written upon every effort, every prayer. I have longed for death, and in a frenzy of despair had many times attempted to end my miserable life. But all to no purpose, except perhaps, to increase the rigor of my imprisonment, if that had been possible. I often wondered if God heard my prayer, and as days, months and years came and went, and brought no relief, I denied the existence of a beneficent creator, and in my despair peopled the universe with hideous monsters and their j y and sport. At last I sank into a despair so deep, so hopeless that thought and action were well nigh paralyzed; even my keepers cruelty could scarcely rouse me from this stupor of horror. Then you came to my prison like an angel of mercy and deliverance, and with you came the first ray of hope that

had pierced the gloom for ten long weary years. Can you wonder that hope has withered?

Emily. Dear Mrs. Archer, do not think of your troubles now, they are past never to return.

Mrs. A. My little comforter, you are a veritable ray of sunshine. I owe you more than I can ever repay, but—

Emily. Hush! do not speak of that, you were my mother's dearest friend. You did everything for her, and I am but doing what she would do if she were here, and I am sure she smiles approval at my course; and her angel song is all the sweeter for my doing. All I can do will never make you my debtor.

Mrs. A. I will say no more of that, and I believe I could once more be calmly happy if I could know the fate of my husband and daughter. If they are living I could not expect a reconciliation, that villain has done his work too well for that. But if I knew their fate, if I were sure that they are dead and at rest, it would relieve me of this suspense. If I could kneel at their graves and pray, if I could whisper my love for them to the daisies perhaps an angel hovering near might take the whisper to the great beyond. I would then feel my loved ones would know my innocence and love me still. Or if I could know they are living, and could see them once more—only once—see them, myself unseen; hear their voices unobserved, I could go away forever, filled with a great joy in comparison with my present feeling of uncertainty.

Emily. Do not give way to grief. I say now, as I have said many times before, that I believe your husband and daughter are alive and well, and will be again restored to you.

Mrs. A. I have hoped against hope until I can hope no more, but as long as I am free from persecution I will try to be resigned.

Emily. I am glad to hear you say that. Let us now return to the inn, where we can rest and mature our plans for the future.

(exit Mrs. Archer and Emily, R.)

Enter Brandon, L.

Brandon. She here? She who could ruin me if her story should be known and believed? What am I to do first? I must silence her—yes, silence her forever. But first I must penetrate the mystery surrounding this hermit. If he should prove to be Randolph Archer—as I hope he may—I must dispose of him as a preliminary, and then she will be my especial care. I cannot, will not, give up revenge, and the fortune I have so long enjoyed. By one means or another I will dispose of these people. I have gone too far to retract, even if I felt disposed to do so, which I do not. And so, by one bold stroke, I will make myself absolute master of the situation. Ah! here comes my brave allies.

Enter Slick and Rooney, L.

—Well, what is your decision? Are we partners? Remember I will pay you well.

Slick. Wa'al, mister, we kinder thought we'd help ye out with this here business, so we might as well commence to onct.

Brandon. All right, men. *(gives money)* If you serve me faithfully you will have no cause to regret it.

Rooney. Well, gineral, what have we to do? Give us yer orders an' we're the b'ys to follow 'em.

Brandon. As a beginning, I want our traveling merchant to tell me what he knows about the old stone house and its occupants.

Slick. Wall, ye see my knowledge o' the old stun house and folks ain't so very extensive. All I know is what I've hearn when I've been a goin' around the kentry in my official capacity.

Brandon. And were you never there?

Slick. Not as anybody knows on.

Brandon. Why you said you had been there, and that the folks were well, and—

Rooney. Hould on there, yer a long ways off the track; 'twas me-self that asked the travelin' store-kaper how the folks war, an' he sed when he wor there last they wor well. I'll be willin' to shwear he told the blessed truth.

Brandon. H'm! I see a neat little trick—a sleek job.

Rooney. An' what the devil would yez expect but a slick job from Misther Slick himself?

Brandon. Well, let that pass. If you serve me well hereafter I will overlook this little stratagem. So now let us to business.

Slick. All right, let the procession move.

Brandon. Now I want to find out all I can about those people in the Glen. I want to know how many there are; how they look; how they live; in short I want to know as much of their history as 'tis possible to obtain. You understand?

Slick. Yas, I think I see the pint. But how are we to make it?

Brandon. How far is it from here?

Slick. Nigh onto six mile as nigh as I kin figger.

Brandon. Six miles? Quite a tramp, but it must be done. See here, my idea is this; we must go down there to-night, gain admittance to the house if possible, learn everything we can, and then hit upon some plan of action as suggested by circumstances.

Slick. That'll do, that'll do. But see it is a big walk for you, an my idea is this: Paddy an me will go down thar to-night an scout around a bit, an' ye go back to the tavern an' take a good rest fer to-morrow. In the mornin' we'll report, an' then ye can determine jist what ye want to do an' no mistake.

Brandon. I believe your advice is good, and I will do as you propose. Now be sure you see all there is to see and hear all you can. Are you armed?

Slick. Only with what natur' furnished us. Ye don't think we'll need weapons, do ye?

Brandon. I hope not, yet you may. Here is a pistol for each of you, they are both well loaded. Do not use them unless it is necessary, but if it is necessary use them well.

Rooney. All right mehearty. Oi'd sooner have a good shillalah than all the barkers like that oi could carry. However, oi'll take it along fer pastime.

Brandon. Now remember, no blabbing. Keep your mouths closed and your eyes open. Report early. Learn all you can. I will return to the inn.

(*exit Brandon, R.*)

Slick. Paddy, if I've got any sense, that man is a villain. There's some deviltry going on here that's sufferin' to be looked arter, an' I think we's just the fellers to look arter it. What do you think?

Rooney. Thin's me sintiments to a T, an' if we don't make the

spalpane look siven ways for Good-Friday, thin me name's not Pat-
rick Rooney at all, at all'

Slick. Now we're off. Keep all ye's wits about ye, an' suthin'
will transpire. Come, Paddy. (*exit Rooney and Slick, L. Change to*

SCENE FIFTH.—*A room in the old stone house. Comfortably furnished. Center table, easy chairs, books and papers on table. When the curtain rises Randolph Archer discovered seated by table, L., reading book.*

Archer. (*looking at book absently*) Paradise Lost. This fits my mood to-day. If I contemplate the tortures of the damned, perhaps my own torments will seem less by comparison. Retrospection only dwells upon a barren waste, a human desert, a shifting sea of unutterable loneliness, swept by the simoon of bitter memories. All life is blasted, not a sprig of hope is green; all, all, is withered—dead. What is this thing we call life? It is but a moment of checkered changing light, a narrow strip of day between two eternal nights. And yet we strive for it, we do not wish to lose it. We have no fear of the dark eternity from which we emerged—that is past; we only fear the eternity to come. We are ushered into this life through no volition of our own, we are hurried out of it against our will. We are mere reeds shaken—broken by the winds and as soon forgotten. Is life then worth the living? Is this forced existence worth preserving? Can the terrors of the unknown, equal the suffering of the known? My life for years has been a continual horror; a nightmare, can eternity be worse? Ten years ago to-day, I sought this lonely spot, to hide myself and my sorrows, from a pitiless world. During all these years, I have seen but one human being other than my own household. I have seen my daughter grow to lovely womanhood; expand her beauties like an opening rose, and fill my house with the fragrance of her love, and presence. As I look on her fresh young beauty, I feel this cannot last; she needs better companionship than I can give her. She will soon begin to grow impatient of the restraints imposed upon her, and will wear out her bright young life against the dingy bars of her prison. But what can I do? Here am I, a wreck on life's stream, floating onward with the tide, with no strength and disposition to make my way against the current; the only thing that binds me to life, is my daughter's love. Oh, if I could clasp her in my arms and we two sink into the blessed oblivion of the great unknown together, in my dying moment I would be supremely happy. It cannot be, I must struggle on, for her sake I must live and endure. It is growing dark, and Rodna is not yet returned, what can have detained her? (*goes to window and looks out*) A furious storm is almost upon us, and yet she is not here. (*walks hurriedly back and forth, lightning and thunder*) Oh, Heaven! Where is she? Why does she stay? She must be lost in the forest—lost to perish. (*storm*) Yes, she must be lost—lost on such a night as this—in the forest perishing—torn by wild beasts! (*kneels*) Oh, God of heaven! spare me this agony! Save oh, save my child! She is all I have! Bring her back to me, bring her back to me! (*furious storm, rises and moves about wildly*) There is no justice, no pity—no God—nothing but agony, agony! I will search for her.

Enter Rodna, followed by Wallace and Dobbs.

Archer. She must not die! (*sees Rodna, and stands stupefied.*

Rodna. (*rushes to him and throws her arms about his neck*) Father, father, I am here alive and well.

Archer. Yes, it is you, safe and well; heaven be praised! But why were you gone so long? I was almost crazed, when I thought of you lost in the forest—I am thankful my fears are not realized.

Rodna. Dear father, I was lost, completely lost, and should have perished miserably, had not I received assistance.

Archer. My daughter you alarm me again, when you speak of perishing. But who is your protector? Heaven bless him!

Rodna. I do not know who he is—I only know he met me in the forest, when I was fainting—perishing, and guided me home.

Archer. What, did he come to the house? You did not ask him to enter?

Rodna. Why, father! After what he did for me, not ask him in out of this storm?

Archer. Rodna, you know I never extend hospitality to any one, under any circumstances. I will reward him liberally, but cannot give him entertainment. Where is he Rodna?

Wallace. (*coming forward*) He is here, sir.

Archer. (*aside*) I fear my secret is discovered. (*aloud*) Allow me to thank you for the service you rendered my daughter; and also allow me to offer you something more substantial than thanks.

(*takes out pocket-book.*

Wallace. Pardon me, sir. I feel amply repaid for all my trouble, in the consciousness that I was able to assist your daughter, and all I ask is permission for myself and companion to remain with you until the storm subsides.

Archer. It may seem very rude in me, to refuse so small a request after the great service you rendered my daughter; but for ten years no one has crossed my threshold, except members of my own family. My rule is inflexible in this, and cannot be broken; so however rude and unthankful I may seem, I must request—nay insist that you retire from this room—and house.

Rodna. Father, do let these strangers stay until the storm is over.

Archer. It cannot be my child, I would gladly give them money—anything—but permission to tarry beneath this roof. I must insist gentleman, that you leave my house at once.

Dobbs. (*to Wallace*) See here, we'd better be goin' or we'll have the devil to pay here, an' no mistake.

Wallace. (*to Archer*) I am very sorry that I consider it necessary to disregard your order for a short time. I have something to say to you which is of the utmost importance to you and yours.

Archer. I am at a loss, sir, to understand your meaning; you a stranger have something of importance to say to me? I do not believe you—it is only an artifice to gain time. Why, I have had no communication with the outside world, for ten years.

Wallace. And yet sir, with all your doubts and disbelief, what I have told you is true. I have traveled a thousand miles with the sole purpose of seeing you Mr. Archer.

Archer. (*aside*) My God! To see me? I am lost. (*aloud*) You are mistaken—mistaken, do you hear? My name is not Archer—you are in error. (*aside*) Oh, heaven! It has come at last. (*aloud*)

You—both of you—leave my house, now—at once—and forever.

Wallace. Mr. Archer I will not leave your house, until I have an opportunity to explain my meaning and intentions.

Archer. I don't wish to hear anything you can say; I only want you to take yourself off. Once more I command you to go.

Wallace. And once more I refuse. You must hear my story.

Archer. You will not go? The consequences be upon your own head. (*draws pistol, about to level it at Wallace, Dobbs rushes forward seizes his arm and disarms him.*)

Rodna. Father, father, what would you do?

Archer. What would I do? Defend myself and household against unwarranted intrusion.

Rodna. Oh, father, commit murder? No, no, you must be calm, you must think.

Archer. Think child? I am always thinking, thinking of the wrong and persecutions I have suffered; thinking of the weary years spent in exile; thinking of my life blasted; thinking of a future without hope; thinking until my brain whirls, and my only object, a desire for revenge and death. Thinking—thinking—thinking of the past—of the present—and of that to come. (*knocking heard*) Ha! What is that? Am I to be forever pursued and persecuted? (*knocking*) Is there no way to escape my fate?

Rooney. (*outside*) Open the dure my by'e, we'd as well mate the storm inside as to stay out here an' be drowned loike blind kittens.

Enter Slick and Rooney L., without ceremony. Dobbs hides, Wallace, Archer, and Rodna on R. facing L.—as they enter, Rodna advances to meet them; Archer much agitated talking with Wallace.

Rodna. What means this unceremonious intrusion?

Slick. Your servant ma'am. (*bows*) We were kitched out in this big storm an' so we come in to wait a bit until it is over.

Rodna. This is an unwarranted liberty; you must retire.

Rooney. We couldn't think of it till the storm sthops.

Archer. You will think of it now—there is the door, go!

Enter Brandon, hurriedly L. comes to C. all stare at him.

Brandon. Well my lads, I am here, I thought perhaps I might be needed, so I procured a guide, and came on in of spite of storm and darkness. (*sees Archer, aside*) Ha, ha! It is he, I have tracked him to his lair. (*aloud*) Well, Randolph Archer, you do not seem overjoyed to see me! You give the friend and companion of your boyhood and youth, a very cool reception I think—have you no word of welcome for your old friend?

Archer. Job Brandon!

Brandon. Yes, Randolph Archer, Joe Brandon. Why don't you welcome me?

Archer. Why do you persecute me? You destroyed my home, and made me an exile—is not that enough?

Brandon. No it is not enough; I want to give you one more pang; I want to see you writhe in mortal agony, when I tell you your wife was innocent in thought and deed; when I tell you she was pure as an angel; when I tell you she was the guileless instrument I used to brand you a—

Archer. Job Brandon, you have made a mistake in seeking me out

Ten years ago, I registered a solemn vow, that if ever you crossed my path, I would end your miserable life. And now I will make my vow good.

Archer starts towards Brandon, who draws pistol and shoots Archer. Slick and Rooney attempt to interfere for Brandon, Wallace knocks Slick down, Dobbs rushes in and trips Rooney; mean time Rodna kneels and supports Archer's head.

Brandon. (triumphantly) Ah, Randolph Archer, who triumphs now?——(Tableau.)

CURTAIN.

ACT II.

A period of four or five weeks is supposed to have elapsed, between act I. and act II.

SCENE FIRST.—A room in the Inn, substantially furnished. Mrs. Archer and Emily Joyce, discovered seated at table R.

Emily. Dear Mrs. Archer, why are you so sad to-day? The storm of last night seems to have left a shadow upon your face. Are you sure you are quite well?

Mrs A. Yes, Emily, I am quite well physically, but my mind is filled with gloomy forebodings. There is a nameless shadow hovering over me, a something I cannot define, seems to be crushing out my life.

Emily. These I think are groundless fears, it is but a reaction from the buoyancy you have felt for the past few weeks; so cheer up, and let me see you smile again.

Mrs A. Yes Emily, for your sake I will endeavor to be my wonted self. But this dread is upon me like the incubus of some horrid dream.

Emily. Explain your fears. Tell me what you dread.

Mrs A. I cannot put my fears into words. There is before me a gigantic form of shadowy terror, that goes on expanding like the poor fisherman's genii, until it fills the whole horizon—a nameless, shapeless, horror; a presentment of some terrible calamity is ever present—I cannot shake it off.

Emily. I hope and believe your presentments of evil will prove false. Come, let us take a walk, the brightness outside will dissipate your unpleasant thoughts.

Mrs A. I dare not go far from the house; we will go into the garden for a short time. Get my wraps and bonnet, please. (*exit, Emily, L.*) I must make an effort to shake off this fear; perhaps a breath or two of this delicious mountain air will aid me.

Enter Mrs. Perkins, C.

Mrs P. How are you feeling to-day, Mrs. Archer? You look worn out. I fear you are not well.

Mrs A. I am not feeling well to-day, Mrs. Perkins. You have

heard something of my history and therefore know I have been the victim of systematic persecution for years. And to-day the old dread is upon me, I cannot shake off the impression that some terrible calamity is about to befall me. It makes no difference which way I turn I can see nothing but the scowling malignant face of my enemy. Oh! Mrs. Perkins, it is terrible, terrible!

Mrs P. Do not give way to your dark forebodings, Mrs. Archer. If your old enemy should find you he could do you no harm here—you have friends who would protect you.

Mrs A. I know I have in yourself and husband, true friends; but I could not think of bringing trouble upon you, as it would surely do if you should openly defend me. My persecutor is wealthy and powerful, and if he should find me here, and protected by you, he would stop at nothing until you had felt the blistering touch of his vengeance. No, Mrs. Perkins, I must fight the battle alone.

Mrs P. You have not told me the name of your enemy. Is that a secret?

Mrs A. Oh, no. I did not wish to burden you with all my troubles so I did not tell his name or all his villainies. His name is Job Brandon.

Mrs P. Job Brandon!

Mrs A. You seem surprised, Mrs. Perkins. Do you know him?

Mrs P. I have seen him.

Enter Emily, L.

Emily. Here are your wraps and bonnet. Good morning Mrs. Perkins, I hope you are well?

Mrs P. Quite well, thank you.

Emily. Come, Mrs. Archer, we will be going. I am so anxious to see the roses on your cheeks and the smile on your lips again.

Mrs A. As Emily insists so strongly I cannot refuse.

Mrs P. Do not go far from the house, you are not able to take a long walk this morning.

Mrs A. Only into the garden, we will soon return.

(exit Emily and Mrs. Archer, R.)

Mrs P. Job Brandon! I was sure I could not be mistaken in the man. He has villain stamped too plainly upon his countenance. His presence here casts a shadow upon Mrs. Archer's path. I must consult with my husband; Mrs. Archer shall be protected if we can do it.

Enter Perkins, C.

—Ah! John, I am glad you came in, I was just going to look for you.

Perkins. Well, Matilda, what is it now? Are the provisions all gone? or the carpets give out? or the cook in a tantrum? or the chambermaids on a strike? or—

Mrs P. There, John, that will do. You seem to imagine I can think or talk of nothing but provisions, or servants. That ain't it, I want to speak of Mrs. Archer.

Perkins. Of Mrs. Archer? Why, what's the matter with her? She ain't going away is she?

Mrs P. Well, I don't know. Do you know, John, I have found out who the villain is that's persecuted her so long?

Perkins. Is that so? Who is he? I'd like to punch his head.

Mrs P. It's Job Brandon!

Perkins. Job Brandon? Pshaw, Matilda, you are getting demented.

Mrs P. I tell you, John Perkins, I know what I'm talking about, and I say it's Job Brandon; and what's more I believe this same Job Brandon had more to do with this row at the old stone house than any of us think—that's what I believe.

Perkins. I tell you, Matilda, I don't believe a word of it. Mr. Brandon pays well, and—

Mrs P. See here, John Perkins, don't you suppose a villain could pay as well as an honest man? If that's all the reason you've got for thinking him honest it's a mighty poor one, I can tell you.

Perkins. You say Mrs. Archer told you it was Brandon? Well, if she says so, I'll believe it. But Matilda, mebbe she is mistaken, mebbe there's another man by the name of Job Brandon.

Mrs P. That of course is possible. But I believe this is the man. And I want you to keep your eyes and ears open, and if he is the villain as we suspect, we must help Mrs. Archer circumvent him.

Perkins. That's so, Matilda. I believe Mrs. Archer is a mighty good woman, and I'll help her if I can. I want to see that peddler Slick; I'm sure he knows something about him. He's a mighty cute one; don't know as I can manage to get anything out of him, but I'll try.

Mrs P. There he comes now, pack and all. * I'll go and send him right in. (exit, c.)

Perkins. Now Matilda speaks of it there is something I don't quite like about this Brandon. He's polite enough, and all that, and he pays well, but there seems to be something lacking; I can't just tell what, but there's something, and I know it. If he is the devil who has caused her all this trouble he'll wish he'd never been born.

Enter Slick, c.

—How dye do; how dye do, Mr. Slick? Take a seat, take a seat. How is trade these days? Pretty good, I take it.

Slick. Wa'al, yes, fair to middlin.' Don't think I've got any reason to complain.

Perkins. How is the Widow Dill now?

Slick. Why the widder's gettin' long purty fair I allow. She was considerable pert like when I was up to her house last Tuesday.

Perkins. Ahem! Yes, the widow is a getting along in years.

Slick. Yas, she's a gittin' along into the seared and yellor leaf period, as the poet says.

Perkins. I suppose the widow is getting too old to buy much?

Slick. Ef you'd a hearn her a bargainin' for a piece o' blue and white figgered caliker, the other day, you'd a thought she was right in her prime. It takes a heap o' real down-right cuteness to sell her anything fur a livin' price.

Perkins. (after a long pause) Oh! by the way, Mr. Slick, have you heard anything new about the muss down at the old stone house?

Slick. No I ain't.

Perkins. Do you suppose Brandon had anything to do with it?

Slick. He might 'a had.

Perkins. Mr. Slick, it's my private opinion Brandon is a villain.

Slick. Mebbe he is.

Perkins. And it's my opinion, Mr. Slick, that you know more about this affair than you'd care to tell.

Slick. What makes you think so?

Perkins. I have reasons, and I think they are good ones.

Slick. See here, landlord, ef you think your agoin' to pump me you've overshot yer mark, I can tell ye.

Perkins. I don't want to pump you, Mr. Slick, but there are two ladies in my house who have been awfully wronged by that man, and I am bound to protect them if I can; and so I want to know what sort of a chap I've got to deal with.

Slick. Who air these ladies?

Perkins. One is a Mrs. Archer, and—

Slick. Mrs. who?

Perkins. Mrs. Archer and—

Slick. (*jumping up*) Thunderation and the big-horn spoon!

Perkins. Why, what's the matter? Have you gone crazy?

Slick. Archer—Archer! Why drat my buttons that's the old chaps name that lives in the haunted house.

Perkins. You don't say?

Slick. Yes I do say, and mean it too. See here, landlord, I want ter see Mrs. Archer; I kin tell her somethin' that'll do her lot's o' good or I'm a sinner.

Perkins. All right, Mr. Slick; I'll go and bring 'em right in if they'll come. (*exit, C.*)

Slick. Now if this turns out as I'm purty sartin it will, it'll make a first-rate romance. That devil Brandon has broke up the Archer family I'll bet, and now he wants to make way with the old man. That's some deep plot here, but that cuss 'll find there's a purty big bug under the chip afore he's done. I'll git Paddy and we'll go fur him like sin. We'll make him wish he'd never struck this part of the country. I guess the wimmen air a comin'.

Enter Perkins, Mrs. Archer, and Emily, L.

Perkins. Mr. Slick, here are the ladies, Mrs. Archer and Miss Joyce.

Slick. How dye do, how dye do. I am glad to see you, an' I believe ye'll be glad to see me when we come to an understanding.

Emily. We are glad to meet you, Mr. Slick.

Slick. Ye see, ladies, in my perambulations up an' down in this world I find out a good many queer things, an' among 'em I've found that a miserable skunk by the name of Job Brandon is a persecutin' you—

Mrs. A. What do you know of my relations with Job Brandon?

Slick. I don't know nothin' pertickler about your relations with him, but I do know he's a sneakin' villain an' needs watchin'.

Mrs. A. Mr. Slick, when did you meet this man?

Slick. I met him right here in this 'ere house.

Mrs. A. Here in this house? Merciful heaven, I am lost!

Slick. Now, Mrs. Archer, don't go to takin' on, Job Brandon won't never harm ye here. That's what I wanted to see ye about, so ye wouldn't git skeered if ye should happen to see him kinder unexpected like. Ye jist keep a stiff upper lip, an' if ye happen to git a chance to talk to him be as sassy as ye want to.

Mrs A. Oh, heavens! my worst fears are realized. I shall be in an agony of fear until I can escape him again. Oh, Emily, we must fly. Every moment we remain here increases my danger. He may discover me at any moment, and then I should be lost.

Slick. Mrs. Archer, he knows ye are here now, an' the safest way is fer ye to stay right here, where ye know ye have friends. I tell ye again' that Job Brandon shan't never harm ye while Hezekiah Slick kin lift a finger to help ye. So ye jest keep cool and listen an' you'll hear somthin' drop one o' these days. Come, landlord, let's go an' fix our trap fer this cussed old fox. He's purty cute, but we'll fix him yet. *(exit Slick and Perkins, L.)*

Mrs A. Oh! Emily, Emily! What shall we do? In our fancied security we have been too careless. He has followed our track like a sleuth-hound, and is now only waiting to make me again his prisoner. But that he shall never do; I am prepared to take my own life, and rather than fall into his hands again I will do it. Yes, sooner than be in his power I will blot out forever my miserable existence; rather than endure his tyranny and torture I will brave the wrath of outraged heaven, and escape him by destroying myself. The very gulf of hell, yawning at my feet, could not shake me with its terrors, as does his presence. Oh, I am indeed accursed.

Emily. Do not give way to despair. We are gaining friends. We could give him battle on his own ground and gain the victory. I have more hope now than ever before. One more struggle and his power will be gone—you will then be free.

Mrs A. If I could feel your hope I would gladly meet and give him battle.

Emily. Do not give way; be brave, be resolute, all will yet be well. I will go and speak with Mrs. Perkins a few minutes. Meantime summon up your courage and resolution—our friends will protect us.

Mrs A. Dear Emily, your courage inspires me with new hope. I will summon up my resolution and battle for liberty.

Emily. The clouds are lifting, be of good cheer. *(exit Emily, L.)*

Mrs A. This new strength and courage is a revelation to me; I feel almost equal to facing this villain and taunting him with his crimes. It may be the strength of desperation, but whatever the cause, it makes me seem like my old self. I could meet him now and deal him blow for blow.

Enter Brandon, L., unobserved.

—He will not find me broken and dispirited, but with sufficient courage and determination to destroy forever his power over me. *(sees Brandon)* Ah! Job Brandon, to what am I indebted for this visit?

Brandon. To the great regard I have for you, Mrs. Archer. Allow me to congratulate you; you are looking remarkably well.

Mrs A. Yes, the change from your fostering care to these mountains has made a wondrous change in me.

Brandon. So I perceive. I suppose you will be ready to return with me to your old quarters at any time now?

Mrs A. Return with you? Never.

Brandon. You should be well aware that I have a way of accomplishing whatever I undertake—a way of bending people to my will—or breaking them, if they prove refractory.

Mrs A. You need not call up recollections of your villainies, they will not soon be forgotten.

Brandon. Villainies, Mrs. Archer? How can you say that after all I have for you?

Mrs A. How could I say anything else after all you have done for me? If I was asked to point out the incarnation of evil I would point to you and say, behold it there.

Brandon. (*laughs*) Ha, ha, ha! I must say the opinion of me you express so freely and forcibly is not particularly flattering.

Mrs A. Flattering? The arch enemy of mankind must retire abashed, and hide his diminished head when you are near.

Brandon. 'Tis a pity to break in on so pleasant a conversation—but business before pleasure. I shall expect you to be ready to accompany me in half an hour.

Mrs A. Accompany you? Job Brandon your power over me is no more. There was a time when your step would send me crouch- and shivering into some dark corner; when your presence stupefied me with terror; when a glance from your eyes would turn me faint with fear. That time is no more, and never will be again. A worm when trodden upon will sting the heel that crushes it. You attempted to crush me and almost succeeded; you will now learn that I can sing. I have told my story and it is believed; a word from me and your life would not be safe a moment; one shout from me and strong and willing arms would instantly gather about me and offer protection. Your crimes are bearing the fruit you have sown in iniquity. Now, sir, show your boasted power if you dare.

Brandon. Woman, you know not with whom you are dealing. I am not so easily balked as you suppose. You are yet in my power. nor wraths of gods, nor hate of devils, shall aid you to escape me. You shall go with me.

He starts toward her, she steps back and presents pistol at Brandon, who stops and glares at her.

Enter from R. and L., Perkins, Mrs. Perkins, Emily, Slick and Rooney. Tableau.

Mrs A. Back, wretch! I had thought with this weapon to end my own life, but I have changed my mind. One step at your peril. (*sees her friends and lowers pistol*) There are my friends Job Brandon. Do you think me weak and helpless? I defy you now!

(*Change to*

SCENE SECOND.—A village street in 1st grooves.

Enter Job Brandon, R.

Brandon. She has foiled me, curses on her. Why did I wait to parley with her? Dolt, idiot, that I am, I might have known better. I should have seized and gagged her at once, thus making her escape impossible. Her fears are now aroused, and I must be doubly cautious. That fool of a peddler and his Irish companion seem to have deserted me, and at a critical time, too. No matter, I believe my cunning is more than a match for the block-heads she has secured for her defense. I must and will have her in my power at any cost. And then—well, no matter, she will trouble me no more. Now how am I to dispose of Randolph Archer? My hand must have forgot

its cunning or I would then have completed half my revenge. And again I have put him on his guard. And that fellow Wallace, I think he is called, seemed to be on friendly terms with the family. He was very willing to assist in their defense. New complications seem to arise on every hand, but I will triumph yet, I will wait quietly a few days or weeks as may seem necessary, and when the time is ripe for action sweep them from my path forever.

(*exit Brandon, L.*)

Enter Slick and Rooney, R.

Rooney. An' did yez hear the bloody thafe a talkin' wid himself, me jewil?

Slick. Yes, Paddy, and we didn't hear much good o' ourselves either, did we?

Rooney. It's moighty little oi care for what the loiks of him sez. But what the divil air we goin' to do nixt?

Slick. I'll tell ye, Paddy; you go down to the old stun house an' see if you kin find that chap Wallace, an' if ye kin find him tell him all ye know about the hull concern, an' git him to come up here if ye kin; an' I'll stay around here an' look arter this cuss Brandon. D'ye understand?

Rooney. Yer right by'e, an' oi'l be off as lively as a bank cashier wid the money box. So long, me jewil. (*exit Slick, R., Rooney, L.*)

SCENE THIRD.—A garden at the old stone house. Garden seat, R. C.

Enter Rodna and Archer, R. Archer in dressing gown and slippers, looking pale and weak, leaning on Rodna's arm.

Rodna. There father, rest yourself in the shade, this delicious breeze will do you good.

Archer. Thanks child, you are indeed a most excellent nurse.

Rodna. What can have detained Frank—Mr. Wallace I mean. He promised to return in two weeks, and now it is nearly four since he left us.

Archer. My old fate, Rodna. Hope has ever been to me a fickle goddess; she has ever lured me on and as often proved false—like a traveller in the desert who sees just before him a beautiful lake of rippling limpid water, dancing in the sunlight—he, parched with thirst, perishing, used his last atom of strength to reach it, the delusion of mirage. Heaven help us both.

Rodna. Father, dear, dear father, do not despair—do not lose hope. I am confident our new found friend will be true to us. This delay is caused by some unexpected circumstance. I know he will come, and with him the long expected and hoped for joy.

Archer. Dear Rodna, youth and hope are ever companions, but the disappointment of years at last casts a shadow and hope shines but dimly.

Rodna. You are not old, father.

Archer. Not in years, child; but an eternity of suffering and sorrow has passed over me. Many times I have lifted the cup of happiness to my lips only to have it dashed to the ground and broken. Like Tantalus always athirst, but not a drop of nectar to cool my burning lips. I have fought against fate and been vanquished. I have struggled with despair and hoped on. Now, I can hope no more.

Rodna. Share your wrongs and sufferings with me, father, I am young and strong and will help you bear your sorrow. Confide in me—tell me the story of your life.

Archer. Oh, Rodna, child, you know not what you ask. And yet you must know some time—why delay? Child, your father has the brand of Cain upon his forehead—he is accused of murder.

Rodna. Murder! Oh! father, father, it is not true? Tell me it is not true?

Archer. No, no, it is false—false. If I did take her life it was a mistake; I did not intend it I do not believe— Oh! I know I did not kill her, but I have no means of proving my innocence.

Rodna. Tell me all. Let me know the worst.

Archer. Rodna, listen to me—listen to a story never before told to mortal ears; listen to a tale of horror, the thought of which almost unmans me. Years ago I possessed an ample fortune, was courted and petted by society; surrounded by friends, envied by some; the future opened before me joyously. I wooed and won a beautiful girl. We were married, and perfect happiness was mine. After a time one of the envious ones set about my ruin. Years came and went, but his hatred did not abate. He and an accomplice at last made me jealous of my wife—craftily fed my passion. I watched her. One day I found her in his arms. I rushed into the room, felled him to the floor, and—struck her savagely, brutally, as she knelt at my feet begging, pleading to be heard. I fled, I knew not where. When my reason returned I was in a miner's cabin, surrounded by rough but kind-hearted men. They told me that six months before I had come to them foot-sore and weary, and almost naked. They pitied me, took me in and gave me food, clothing, and shelter, and for six months I had labored with them in the mine. Then I thought of my home, of you, but eight years old, and the old madness almost came upon me again. I resolved to go back to the city; I did so, and found myself branded a murderer. I was accused of killing my wife, your mother. After considerable search I found where you were. I had completed arrangements for flight, and for taking you with me, when I met Job Brandon. He recognized me at once. Told me warrants were out for my arrest. Offered to atone for his share in my crime, by furnishing me means for flight and concealment. I accepted his offer, and that night seized you and fled. After weeks of wandering I found this place and made it my home. You know our history.

Rodna. Oh, father, you have suffered—do suffer. I do not believe the blow you gave took my mother's life. If she was murdered Job Brandon did it, I am sure.

Archer. No, I do not believe I killed her outright, and I have thought it possible she is yet living; but if she is living that is only slight mitigation of my crime. I was insanely jealous, and in my passion and desperation, did a deed that cannot be pardoned. If she be living what has she suffered? If she be dead, what am I? Can you wonder I have lost hope?

Rodna. It is indeed terrible, but I have faith in your innocence; and I believe this mystery will soon be solved and you will stand before the world vindicated.

Archer. Vindicated? No, no. If it could be proved that I did not take her life I might be vindicated in law, but at the tribunal of my own conscience, vindication is impossible. No penance I could

do, no misery I could endure, would wipe out the stain of my guilt. Oh, Rodna, Rodna, that villain's confession proves her innocence and deepens my crime.

Rodna. Now, father, that I know your sorrow I will do what I can to help you bear it. Confide in me—trust me.

Archer. I do and will, my child. I need your sympathy, your support. You are my only anchor to the world—my only hope.

Rodna. Dear father, if I cannot give you a son's strength I will give you a daughter's love.

Archer. Heaven bless you, my daughter, for your steadfast courage and sweet love, I can see the beginning of our trials, but God alone can see the end. Rodna, we must leave our old home, leave it forever. There is no safety here for me. That fiend may come at any moment, armed with a warrant for my arrest, and that would consign me to a felon's cell, and perhaps a scaffold. I have waited as long for Wallace as I dare, every moment spent here now increases my peril. I must fly, fly. I will endeavor to escape him once more, and if I fail may God pity you, my child.

Rodna. Father, father, there comes Mr. Wallace. I was sure he would return. Cheer up, your last days will be your best ones.

Enter Wallace, L.

Wallace. (*going to meet Archer*) I am glad to see you again, Mr. Archer, and you too Miss Rodna. (*shakes hands with both*)

Rodna. We were beginning to despair of your return, had almost concluded you had deserted us.

Wallace. I met with some perplexing difficulties which detained me, but here I am at last.

Archer. What have you found? What have you done for me? Tell all—all—do not fear, I can bear sorrow—disappointment—anything better than this suspense.

Wallace. (*aside*) Joy will not kill. (*aloud*) Mr. Archer, you are vindicated, your innocence is proved.

Rodna. Oh, joy, joy!

Archer. No—no—it cannot be—it cannot be—do not torture me; tell me the truth—you do not mean it?

Wallace. I say again you are vindicated. I have the proof. Your wife lives.

Archer. (*comes to C. hands and eyes uplifted*) She lives, she lives! (*kneels*) Oh, God I thank thee. Let me die—let me die. (*falls in swoon.* *Rodna and Wallace, assist him to a seat, he quickly regains consciousness*) Is this a dream? Am I cursed with another delusion? Or am I dead and is this heaven?

Rodna. No father, you are not dead, nor is this a delusion. It is the blessed truth—you are free, free. So calm yourself and let us listen to our deliverer's story.

Archer. Yes, yes, tell us about it—tell us all.

Wallace. You know, Mr. Archer, I had positive proof of the financial fraud perpetrated upon you. And when I returned to the city after hearing your sad story—or a part of it—I determined to get at the truth or falsity of Brandon's story regarding the death of your wife. I patiently searched the record of burial permits, but could find no evidence of her death and burial. I then commenced a careful examination of court records for a series of years; and found that some ten years ago Job Brandon was appointed guardian

of Mrs. Edna Archer; who was then adjudged insane and committed to the State asylum. The records of that institution showed she had been discharged from there one year after admission. Then for a time I lost trace of her, but at last discovered she had been imprisoned in a private mad-house since her discharge from the State institution, until a short time ago she managed to make her escape, and has not been heard of since. Such in brief is the history of my doings since I left you. I have placed detectives on Mrs. Archer's track and will leave nothing undone to discover her whereabouts.

Rodna. Oh! she must be found. I must clasp her in my arms—kiss her dear lips—and beg her to forgive my dear, kind, loving father.

Archer. That, Rodna, she can never do. But if I could see her, and ask her forgiveness, I could then die content.

Wallace. I also found another chapter in Brandon's villainies. I found his lawful wife confined in the same mad-house from which Mrs. Archer made her escape. I took measures to obtain her relief and at the proper time will bring them face to face.

Rodna. Where is she, I would so much like to see her?

Wallace. She is at the village in care of my friend Dobbs. Ah! here comes a visitor, and I think it is the Irishman who came here with Brandon a few weeks ago. Yes, I am sure 'tis he.

Enter Rooney, L.

Rooney. (*bowing and doffing his cap*) The top o' the mornin' to yez all. It's a fine day I'll be thinkin'.

Archer. Yes, the weather is very nice to-day. What can I do for you?

Rooney. Oh, nuthin' at all, at all, only I kim down to tell yez it wor a big mistake meself an' Mishter Slick made whin we kim down here wid that dirty blackguard Brandon.

Archer. Yes, I think it was.

Rooney. An' I want to tell yez that the spalpane is a plannin' more mischief fur yez here.

Archer. We have expected that, and we are now ready to defy him.

Rooney. Good fer yez. Oi'l go back to the village an' tell me partner to drive ahead, fur everything is ready on this end of the line.

Archer. I don't get your meaning clearly, Mr. Mr——

Rooney. Rooney—Patrick Rooney, at yer service. (*bows*)

Archer. Well, Mr. Rooney, you seem to have taken a great interest in our affairs lately. May I ask the reason?

Rooney. Sartinly, sartinly, Mishter Archer, an' oi'l tell ye the blissed truth so I will. Ye see, man, me partner Mishter Slick, who is a first-class travelin' dry goods emporium, went into a partnership wid Mishter Brandon to find out any little quare things that might happen about this place, an' the night we kim down here we found we'd sold out mighty chape to one o' the devil's own imps, an' so we broke up the contract an' kim over ter yer side.

Archer. See here, my man, when you go back to the village you may tell Mr. Brandon we are expecting a call from him. Tell him to come as soon as he likes, we are ready to receive him.

Rooney. All right, oi'l tell him sure if oi kin clap me two eyes onto him. So good luck an' good day to yez all.

(exit Rooney, L., bowing)

Wallace. If this fellow is one of Brandon's creatures he will not take a very flattering report to his master. Well, I must go to the village and make some arrangements for removing you from this place. You must be placed in possession of your own again.

Rodna. You will not be gone long I hope?

Wallace. Only long enough to transact the necessary business.

Archer. Return as quickly as you can, my dear boy, we feel the need of your good counsel.

Wallace. I will hasten.

(exit, L.)

Archer. A noble youth, Rodna, a noble youth.

Rodna. Let us go into the house, father.

(exit, Rodna and Archer, L.)

SCENE FOURTH.—Apartment in 2nd grooves. Jonathan Dobbs and Hezekiah Slick enter R.

Slick. I've hern, Mr. Dobbs, thet you've bin a travelin' around purty considerable lately?

Dobbs. Wall, ya'as, I hev' been gittin' 'round right smart lately, Mr. Slick.

Slick. Seen a purty chunk o' kentry, I reckon, Mr. Dobbs?

Dobbs. Ya'as, a right good chunk, that's so.

Slick. Did ye travel very fer, Mr. Dobbs?

Dobbs. Ya'as, a right smart piece.

Slick. Did ye travel east or west, Mr. Dobbs?

Dobbs. Wa'al I disremember exzactly, but I'm kinder of the opinion I went quite a strip both ways.

Slick. I reckon ye must a made a purty good pile o' chink?

Dobbs. I might have made more, an' then agin I might hev' made a darned sight less.

Slick. Jes' so, jes' so, that's about what I calkerlated on. Was ye doin' bizness fer yerself, Mr. Dobbs?

Dobbs. See here, Slick, ef anybody axes ye about that tell 'em ye don't know a blamed thing about it, will ye?

Slick. Sartinly, sartinly, Mr. Dobbs. I hope thars no offense?

Dobbs. Not any, Mr. Slick, only I don't like yer cussed wooden nutmeg inquisitiveness, that's all.

Slick. Oh, sartinly, sartinly, Mr. Dobbs. I kinder thought as how we might git up a sort o' mutual benefit society or suthin'; cause ye see I kinder thought as how I might know suthin' that ye don't know, but would kinder like to know. That's all, Mr. Dobbs; that's all.

Dobbs. I'd like ter know what you know about the business I've been away on?

Slick. Yas, I thought as how he might like to know.

Dobbs. Now see here, Slick, ef you know anything about this 'ere bizness I want you to tell me what it is.

Slick. Law! you don't say.

Dobbs. Ya'as, I do say an' mean it too.

Slick. Why, really I believe yer gettin' out o' sorts, Mr. Dobbs?

Dobbs. Ya'as I air a gittin' out o' sorts, an' I want ye to know I am all wool an' a yard wide.

Slick. Pshaw! ye don't say? I've heard my old father say time

an' agin, that ye could lead a hoss to water but ye couldn't make him drink if he didn't want to; an' the old man knew purty considerable, I calkerlate.

Dobbs. I see ye won't tell what ye know, an' I've a good mind to thump ye jest for luck.

Slick. I wouldn't do it, Mr. Dobbs, I wouldn't really. I'm dreadfully afraid it would give ye a pain in yer stomach or somewhere. Though ef your agoin' to do it, now is the accepted time ye know.

Dobbs. Would ye fight an' no mistake?

Slick. I'm kinder of the opinion I would. Ef ye have any doubts about it ye'd better try it on, so as ye'll be perfectly satisfied.

Dobbs. I won't touch ye now, Slick; but I want to tell ye one thing, any man what is ketched with that sneakin' cuss, Brandon-or to be pounded within an inch of his life.

Slick. See here, Mr. Dobbs, ef that's what you've got agin me I wouldn't mind bein' kicked a few times, more or less; for that war the meanest thing I ever got into.

Dobbs. Why ye don't mean to say ye've quit him, do ye?

Slick. Yes I do. Arter that raid on the old house that night we dissolved mighty suddint, an' I'm doin' what I kin to head the varmint off.

Dobbs. Give us yer hand. I don't care ef ye do sell bass-wood hams and wooden nutmegs, thar's a heap o' man in ye anyhow.

Slick. Ye see thar's a couple o' wimmen here that that cuss has been a persecutin' for a good spell, an' they're skeered almost to death; an' I told 'em I'd see 'em through safe and sound, an' by hokey I'm agoin' to it.

Dobbs. That's right, that's right. An' ef ye need any help wink at me an' I'll be thar in a hurry.

Slick. Wa'al, now as we've come to an understandin' let's go an' liquidate.

Dobbs. No, I can't do it; I can't leave the house for awhile, I expect my boss here any minute.

Slick. Oh! oi see ye've got a scheme of yer own.

Enter Mrs. Brandon, L., wildly.

—Hello! what's this?

Mrs Bran. I have seen him—he passed the house but a moment ago. He is the same smooth smiling villain. How I hate him. (*to Dobbs, who attempts to restrain her*) Unhand me! Let me go! Have I but changed keepers? Am I to be forever denied my revenge? No, no, away, away; I will not be restrained.

Enter Wallace, R., hurriedly advances to her.

—You are my saviour. (*kneels*) Save me. Oh! do not let them put those cruel irons on me again. (*starts up*) See, see; where they cut into my flesh. (*holds out her hands*) You will not—oh! you will not let them take me. (*pointing to Dobbs and Slick*) There they are—keep them back.

Wallace. Calm yourself, Mrs. Brandon, you are among friends who will protect you. These men are your friends.

Mrs Bran. Oh! I saw him—saw him pass the house; and the sight of him blasted my brain, I again felt his cruel hands upon me, heard again my horrid doom, hissed in my ears, again saw the barred windows of my prison.

Wallace. I entreat you to be calm. You will do yourself and your cause great injury. I promise again you shall meet him face to face, and without fear of violence. Therefore, I beg of you to quiet this agitation.

Mrs Bran. You ask me to be quiet and to be calm, when that man is near? Do you think I am composed of watery elements that I can be an iceberg in the presence of my foe? No, no, the fires of hell pour through my veins instead of blood; my soul is torn with whirlwinds of hate; my hate is a resistless torrent beyond human control. Hear me—hear me all. While that man lives I will think of nothing but revenge; I will know no pity—no remorse; I will summon to my aid the infernal powers; I will know no rest, no peace, until my vengeance is accomplished.

Wallace. Mrs. Brandon you will defeat your own purposes if you do not control yourself.

Mrs Bran. I am calmer now. My reason is again master, so pray do tell me what you have accomplished.

Wallace. Everything I desired. The net is slowly but surely drawing about him. He cannot escape.

Enter Mrs. Archer and Emily, L., unobserved.

—I have prepared my friends for removal, and as soon as a few preliminaries can be settled we will be ready to face the villain with his crimes. The plot was a deep one, but all the ends of the tangled skein are gathered up—but one, and this one I hope will soon be in my possession. As soon as I can restore Randolph Archer's wife to him my work will be accomplished.

Mrs A. (comes forward) Randolph Archer? Heaven be praised! I shall see him once more.

Enter Rooney, R.

Slick. I vum this beats anything.

Mrs Bran. (to Mrs. Archer) And who are you?

Mrs A. I am Randolph Archer's wife.

Wallace. Another victim of Job Brandon's villainies.

Rooney. (aside) There musht be shmoke in my the room.

Slick. Ya'as, I think there is.

(wipes his eyes)

(wipes his eyes)

Mrs Bran. The end is approaching. "Vengeance is mine, and I will repay," saith the Lord.

All. Amen.

CURTAIN.

ACT III.

SCENE FIRST.—The parlor of the Inn, door C. F., fire screen L. c., back; sofa chairs, table, R. of C. *Mrs. Archer and Wallace discovered R. and L., seated.*

Mrs A. You have heard my sad story, Mr. Wallace. You can judge of the suffering I have endured; the only wonder is my rea-

son was not dethroned years ago, and I become a maniac like that poor creature in yonder room.

Wallace. Her hot Italian nature could not endure the strain. I had hoped the change of scene might calm her frenzy, but fear it will not. In her present condition I dare not let her meet Brandon; if she should meet him now the end would be a tragedy.

Mrs A. I had almost said 'twould be a fitting termination to his career of crime. I will not think that it could be so horrible. Are you sure my husband will come? Oh! how I long to see his dear face, hear his loved voice, and feel the clasp of his protecting arms. And yet there is a dread. I must see him unobserved, or in the first transports of this meeting I would die of joy.

Wallace. Your husband will be here presently, so calm yourself as much as possible.

Mrs A. I will, I will. And my daughter—our daughter, tell me what is she like? Is she beautiful—is she good?

Wallace. She is both beautiful and good, Mrs. Archer. I never saw her equal.

Mrs A. You are quite enthusiastic, Mr. Wallace.

Wallace. Mrs. Archer, I love your daughter and she returns my love. I had not thought to say this to you now, but my great love for her impels me to speak. May I hope when your troubles are all past you will give your consent to our marriage. I will furnish you satisfactory proof of my standing and parentage, and—

Mrs A. Hush, hush! If she loves you it would please me more than I can tell to see her your wife. Do not speak of birth or position, you are my daughter's equal, for you have all the essentials of true manhood.

Wallace. Dear Mrs. Archer, you have made me very happy. Ah, they have come, I hear carriage wheels. Be calm, be calm, all will be well.

Mrs A. I cannot—cannot control my feelings. Let me conceal myself behind yonder screen, and for a few moments see him unobserved. Oh! I am almost overcome.

Wallace assists her behind screen and places chair for her, returns to C.

Enter from R., Rodna, Archer and Rooney.

Rooney. Be the powers thin 'twas a moighty rough ride for yez, but here we are right side up.

Rodna. Yes, thanks to your good management, we came through all right. Oh! Mr. Wallace, I never knew what happiness meant until to-day. Where is my mother? Oh! how I long to see her, to clasp her in my arms, kiss her dear face and look into her eyes, and see the love-light shining there.

Rooney. Wid yer lave oi'll be excused and look after the luggage.

Wallace. We will excuse you, Rooney. If you see Slick anywhere tell him to come here, will you? *(exit Rooney, R.)*

Archer. Where is my dear Edna? I cannot control my feelings at the prospect of this meeting. How will she receive me? What will she say after all these years of cruel neglect—after the brutal blow I struck her? I can see her up-turned tear-stained, pleading face, as I saw it then. I can hear the sob of anguish as I raised my hand to deal that fiendish blow. I can see her quivering, insensible form stretched before me. Oh! it is too horrible—I cannot bear the thought.

Wallace. Calm yourself, Mr. Archer; I can assure you you have long since been forgiven.

Rodna. Yes, father, do not allow these gloomy thoughts to disturb the joy and peace of this happy day. Do not live again the long sad years; let the dead past bury its dead, look to the dawning of the new life and rejoice. My life is so glad to-day. Oh! father, there is a well-spring of perennial joy flowing into my soul. Think of it, father, we are free; free, all free—no more slavery, no more prisons, no more loneliness—all that is past. Come up out of your gloom—banish the night, and hail the new dawn, which will forever dissipate your sorrow.

Archer. Rodna, your words thrill me again and again. Oh! if I dare to think that she, my Edna, could in part forgive me the cruel wrong I did her; only in part—my joy would be as boundless as the universe. How gladly would I toil for her; yes, die for her, if by so doing I could bring her happiness. But, Rodna, when I think of the suffering she has endured, of the horrors which surrounded her; when I think of her bright life darkened by my unjust, unreasoning suspicions; when I think of the cowardly cruel blow I struck her. I feel my sin is beyond pardon—I must see her, I must beg her forgiveness; I must know my fate. Rodna, Wallace, where is she? Where is she?

Mrs A. (coming forward) Here, Randolph, my husband.

Archer. (kneels) Oh! Edna, wife, my love, can you forgive me?

Mrs A. (raising him) Fully, freely, Randolph. We were both wrong, but we could not know how that cunning villain plotted for our ruin. Thank heaven his power is gone forever.

Archer. Yes, thanks to our young friend here, to whom we owe all. And now, Edna, we will begin a new life. In the shadow of the old we will build better and stronger. But I forget, I am selfish in my new joy. Rodna, our daughter, waits to greet you.

Mrs A. Come to me, Rodna; let me hold you in my arms once more. A husband and a daughter. Oh! if joy would kill I should surely die. Let me look at you. *(holds her off)* Yes, the promise of your childhood is fulfilled. I am satisfied.

Rodna. Mother, dear, dear mother, how I have longed for this moment. The new life is begun.

Enter Slick, R., rubbing his hands and grinning.

Slick. How d'ye do. How d'ye do. This beats anything I ever seed all holler. By jingo, it kinder makes my eyes water. *(wipes eyes)* Why, ye all look as happy as a bobolink in a medder. I hain't seen sich a good time sence I had the mumps. *(wipes eyes)*

Wallace. Mr. Slick did you see Brandon?

Slick. See here now, don't mister me; call me Hez., I ain't proud. And then again I feel like one of the family a'most.

Wallace. All right. Ha, ha, ha! Well, Hez., did you find Brandon and succeed in inducing him to come here?

Slick. Ya'as, he's a comin' soon, an' we'll hev' to watch the cuss or he'll be a doin' some mischief.

Wallace. We will watch him, and if he attempts any violence arrest him at once.

Archer. What will he do, Mr. Slick; excuse me, I meant Hez. Ha, ha!

Slick. Wa'al, I can't jest make out what he means to do. But

he's cussed mad, an' a swearin' vengeance agin somebody, an' the safest way will be to keep our eyes peeled for him, I allow.

Mrs A. Oh! do not run any risks. Send for some officer and arrest him at once.

Slick. See here ma'am, Hezekiah Slick is officer enough to arrest that sneakin' varmint, an' he wants the job too, purty considerable bad I reckon.

Rodna. Do not take any more risks for us, if harm should befall you we should feel directly responsible.

Slick. Now, miss, don't ye fret about me, I allers try to pay my debts, an' I'm thinkin' I owe that feller a good bit, an' I'm bound to pay it.

Enter Rooney, R., flourishing a shillalah.

—Hello, Paddy, what's been stirring ye up? Ye look flustered.

Rooney. Howly St. Patrick, ye ought to have sane the skirmage I had wid that dirty spalpane of a Brandon!

Archer. With Brandon! Did you have a fight with Brandon?

Rodna. Tell us about it.

Wallace. Yes, Rooney, let us hear about it.

Slick. Come, Paddy, limber yer jaw and give us the particulars.

Rooney. Ye see I kin acrost him in the strate a bit ago, an' oi sez to him, sez I; "The top of the mornin' till yez, Mr. Brandon." An' divil a word did he say at all. An' thin oi sez, sez oi; "It's a fine day, Mr. Brandon." An' wid that he whurrls 'round an' sez he to me, sez he, "Go to the devil you infernal Irishman." An' thin oi sez to him, sez oi, "Oi'll not be callin' at yer house whin yer away." An' wid that he made fur me, swearin' he'd teach me manners. An' whin he kin in reach of me I tipped him one wid me stick an' that samed to satisfy him intirely.

Slick. I say, Paddy, ye never done a better thing than that, an' ye never will.

Enter Perkins, C.

Perkins. Mr. Brandon says he would like to see Mr. and Mrs Archer. Will you see him?

Archer. Yes, show him in. *(exit Perkins, C., bowing)*

Mrs A. Oh! how I dread this meeting, I wish it could be avoided.

Rodna. Courage, mother, it will soon be over.

Wallace. Do not fear, there is no danger, we will not leave you.

Archer. I trust this interview will be the last cloud to cast a shadow upon our lives.

Wallace. I think you two—*(indicating Slick and Rooney)*—had better conceal yourselves just outside the room, so you may be ready at a moment's notice if you are wanted. I hope there will be no trouble but it is best to be prepared.

Rooney. Oi'd like to git another chance at him.

(exit Slick L., Rooney R., shaking club)

Archer. *(to Mrs. Archer)* Courage, love.

Enter Brandon, C., coat dirty, waistcoat soiled; shows furious anger.

Brandon. You sent for me, Randolph Archer. Do you wish to gloat over my defeat, to taunt me with your triumph?

Archer. I sent for you, Job Brandon, to offer you what you have forfeited—life and liberty.

Brandon. And you think you are now in a position to dictate terms to me? Poor fool! you know little of the intensity of my hatred if you suppose I would accept either life or liberty at your hands.

Mrs A. Have you no contrition for what you have done—for the suffering you have caused?

Brandon. Contrition? No, I have no contrition, no regrets, only such as I feel at my failure to accomplish my revenge.

Archer. Have you no fear of the future—no fear of outraged heaven?

Brandon. Fear of the future—fear of outraged heaven? No—a thousand times no. Let woman and fools prate of God's anger—I fear it not. Let superstition and her hand-maid, ignorance, people the unknown with malignant devils and malignant Gods—what care I! Think not to intimidate me with distorted fancies. No—I tell you if your heaven is a reality I would stand at the great throne, in the presence of the Infinite, and ask for nothing but time to accomplish your ruin.

Archer. I beg of you stop and think. The proofs we hold will consign you to a felon's cell and perhaps a scaffold. I do not wish to deprive you of life or liberty. Promise me you will seek a home in some distant country, and cease your persecutions of me and mine, and I will destroy the proofs of your guilt—you shall go free.

Brandon. You ask me to make a promise? I will do it, Randolph Archer—I promise you and yours that while life remains my hate remains. I promise you to seek my revenge wherever you may be, if I can follow. I promise you nothing but death or imprisonment shall stop my pursuit of you. I promise you that come what may—liberty, a prison cell, or a scaffold, with my last breath I will hate and curse you.

Mrs A. How can anything in human shape be so like a fiend?

Brandon. You are the cause of my hate—I loved you. You scorned me and chose him. (shudders
(points to Archer)

Enter Mrs. Brandon and Dobbs, L., he holding her arm.

—Then my love turned to hate—boundless and unfathomable.

Enter Slick L., Rooney R., cautiously.

—It has increased with years until it is a consuming passion. I failed in my aim once, I will try again. *(draws pistol, Slick and Rooney disarm him—he stands scowling with hate)* Foiled again! Curse my ill luck.

Mrs Bran. *(breaks from Dobbs and rushes wildly across stage and faces Brandon, who recoils; confronts him with arms upraised)* I am here, Job Brandon! Hear me!

Brandon. *(recovering himself)* Curse you, how came you here?

Mrs Bran. Look at me, Job Brandon! Look at me! Look at your work! I heard you but now speak of hate—do you hear—hate! What is your hate compared with mine?

Brandon. Leave me, leave me while you can. Why are you here?

Mrs Bran. Why am I here? I am here for vengeance—vengeance. *(Dobbs advances and takes her by the arm—she shakes him off)* Away, away, and give the whirlwind room.

Brandon. Take her away. I do not wish to kill her now.

Archer. }
Rodna. } Horrible!

Mrs Bran. Take me away? No, no, not until your seared and blackened soul shall wake to consciousness. Not until you know the fury of a woman scorned. Not until my vengeance is complete.

Wallace. Mrs. Brandon, I entreat you to be calm.

Mrs Bran. Talk not to me of calmness. You cannot stay the whirlwind's rush or stop the avalanche; nor can a word control the fury of storm-lashed ocean. There is no stop, no stay to my mad hate and fury.

Brandon. What do you want, woman?

Mrs Bran. What do I want? I want your life. I want to see it ebbing, ebbing drop by drop. I want to see the death-damp gather on your brow. I want to hiss into your dying ear the story of my wrongs and my revenge.

Brandon. Go on with your senseless raving. I suppose your new friends enjoy it.

Mrs Bran. Senseless raving? Job Brandon, you stand upon the brink of eternity. I have longed—prayed for this. The time of my triumph has come.

Draws dagger and quickly springs at Brandon and stabs him; he falls, writhes, raises on elbow.

Brandon. I hate, I hate—— (*dies*)

Mrs Bran. My wrongs avenged. My mission is accomplished. Come death, I ask no more. (*stabs herself, falls and dies*)

Archer. A life of hate and crime has ended in a tragedy. A just retribution.

CURTAIN.

RELATIVE POSITIONS, EXITS, &c.

R., means Right; L., Left; R. H., Right Hand, L. H., Left Hand; C., Centre; S. E., or 2d E., Second Entrance; U. E., Upper Entrance; M. D., Middle Door; F., the Flat; D. F., Door in Flat; R. C., Right of Centre; L. C., Left of Centre.

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* * * The reader is supposed to be upon the Stage, facing the audience.

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